THE PORT OF COCHIN

9. All the works in connection with the fourth stage of the harbour are progressing satisfactorily. Many of the major items of work like dredging and reclamation, the building up of the ships' wharfs, the erection of electric cranes, the building of warehouses and transit sheds, and the construction of the combined rail and road bridge between Ernakulam and Venduruthi have already been practically completed. The construction of the road bridge between Willingdon Island and Mattancheri is proceeding satisfactorily. The screwing of the cylinder foundation has been completed and seven of the spans have been erected in position. About $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles of track of the harbour railway have been laid. The construction of the Cochin Harbour Terminus station and the goods shed on the island is practically completed. The new wharf facilities and the road portion of the harbour have been thrown open to lorry traffic from May, and the steamers are now using the wharf also for the loading and unloading of goods. It is expected that all the remaining works will be finished by the beginning of January 1940. The lay-out of Willingdon Island prepared by the Administrative Officer in connection with the letting of lands for various purposes has been approved by the Advisory Committee, and the proposals are now before the Governments concerned. As soon as they are sanctioned, the plan and the particulars will be published for the information of the public. The total expenditure incurred on the fourth stage works (excluding the new dredging plant) up to the end of March 1939 is approximately Rs. 78 lakhs. In this connection, it will be interesting to note that the total outlay on the harbour under the second, third and fourth stages will be almost the same as the preliminary estimate made in 1920. It is the usual experience of most Governments that the final expenditure on a work in many cases turns out to be far in excess of the original estimate. The Administrative Officer, Mr. Bristow, who has been responsible for the preparation of the preliminary estimate and the subsequent execution of the work deserves to be congratulated on the remarkable accuracy with which he prepared the estimates nearly twenty years ago. The total outlay on the Cochin Harbour when all the sanctioned works are completed will be approximately Rs. 2,10,00,000.

10. The trade of the port during the year ending 31st March, 1939, has been very satisfactory, the total volume being 786,000 tons which is nearly 6,000 tons more than in the previous year. The main imports are: grains and pulse 390,000 tons; kerosene, petrol and other oils 114,000 tons; and machinery 15,000 tons. The main items of export are: coir produce 37,000 tons; tea 24,000 tons; cocoanut oil 11,000 tons; rubber 10,000 tons; and cashewnut and kernels 12,000 tons. A comparative study of the averages of

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the previous three years discloses striking variations under the following heads. In the import figures there is a decline of 43,000 tons in grains and pulse, and an increase of 9,000 tons in mineral oils and 2,500 tons in machinery. In the export trade there is an increase of 3,000 tons in cashew kernels and 40,000 tons in mineral sand. On the whole, there is reason to look forward with confidence to a steady increase in the trade of the port. During the month of May 1939, imported grain registered a rise of 10,000 tons over the average for the same period of last year. Oil discloses an increase of 3,000 tons over the average for the past three years. The combined imports and exports for the month showed an increase of 12,000 tons over the average for the past three years.

RECRUITMENT TO THE PUBLIC SERVICES

11. It is nearly three years since the Staff Selection Board for recruitment to public services was constituted. At the time of the inauguration of this scheme it was the intention of Government that the whole position should be reviewed after three years of the working of the Board. I have reason to think that, on the whole, the rules that we framed for guiding the Board have worked successfully and that the legitimate claims of all the communities in the State have been fairly satisfied. Now and then complaints have been heard about the actual application of the rules by the Board or of certain defects in the rules themselves. I am fully aware of the fact that both the public at large and the Legislative Council are keenly interested in this scheme for recruitment to public services. I announced some time back in the Council that it is my intention to review the working of the Board with the help of a committee. Government have now decided to appoint a committee, consisting of four non-official members of the Council together with the Diwan Peishkar, to examine the working of the Staff Selection Board, and the rules made for recruitment. Messrs. K. Ayyappan, E. Ikkanda Warrier, V. J. Mathai and Ismail Haji Essa Sait have been invited to be members of this committee. The committee will begin their sittings about the middle of Chingam, and they are expected to submit their report to Government on or before the end of Thulam 1115. Government have deliberately constituted this committee consisting practically of non-officials, so that the whole working of the Board may be examined in a thorough manner. Government have nothing to hide in this matter, and they are only anxious to get suggestions which will improve the working of the Board to enable Government more effectively to carry out

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